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DEPT FOR SCA - PDAS MOON AND DAS KROL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/17/2019
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [KG](#)
SUBJECT: MANAS UPDATE: KYRGYZ FM WILL PRESENT TRANSIT
CENTER AGREEMENTS TO GOVERNMENT AND PARLIAMENT JUNE 22

REF: A. BISHKEK 599
[1](#)B. BISHKEK 596

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Lee Litzenberger, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (S) Summary: Charge met with Foreign Minister Sarbayev on June 17. Sarbayev confirmed his plan to introduce the Manas agreements in Parliament on June 22, with the vote to approve the agreements to take place June 25. Sarbayev, who had just returned from the CSTO and SCO summits, claimed he told Russian FM Lavrov that the Kyrgyz would begin "negotiations" with the U.S. starting today. Sarbayev proposed to hold "meetings" each day this week with a U.S. "delegation" consisting of the Charge, Manas Air Base Commander, DATT, and Embassy personnel, which he will portray to the government and to Parliament as "military-technical coordination talks." Sarbayev enthusiastically agreed to use these "meetings" to coordinate press guidance for use following the unveiling of the agreements, as well as to discuss initial modalities for implementation of the agreements. End Summary.

Holding "Negotiations"

[1](#)2. (S) Charge met at his residence June 17 with Kyrgyz Foreign Minister Kadyrbek Sarbayev, who detailed his plan to unveil the new Manas agreements. Sarbayev said that at this point, within the Kyrgyz government only he, President Bakiyev, and Minister of Defense Kalyev were fully informed about the agreements. Sarbayev said he would report to President Bakiyev and inform the Prime Minister and selected ministers that his meeting today with Charge was the start of "negotiations," which will continue the rest of this week. Sarbayev said that he and Minister of Defense Kalyev will invite a U.S. "delegation" to the Presidential Compound on June 18, which he will portray to the government and to Parliament as "military-technical coordination talks." Sarbayev suggested that the U.S. "delegation" could include the Charge, the new Manas Air Base Commander, the A/DCM, and the DATT.

Approval on Schedule

[1](#)3. (S) Following these "negotiations," Sarbayev said that on Monday morning, June 22, the Cabinet will meet to consider the agreements. After the Cabinet's rapid approval, Prime Minister Chudinov will present the agreements to Parliament later the same day. Sarbayev said he will be at Parliament as it considers the agreements in committees (June 23) and within party factions (June 24) and then votes on the agreements in the plenary session on Thursday, June 25. Sarbayev was confident that the agreements would be approved before he departs June 26 for the G-8 meeting in Trieste to

discuss the situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Informing the Russians

¶4. (S) Sarbayev, who had just returned from the CSTO summit in Moscow and the SCO summit in Yekaterinburg, claimed he had informed Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov that the Kyrgyz would begin negotiations with the U.S. starting today. Sarbayev declined to share Lavrov's response, but indicated he was confident moving ahead with the new agreements.

Test Shipment of Non-Lethal Cargo

¶5. (S) Sarbayev said he had secured approval for a test shipment of non-lethal cargo by commercial means to Afghanistan (Ref B). He asked that the Embassy immediately send a diplomatic note formally requesting approval for the shipment, which he will leak to the press on June 18. Sarbayev repeated his earlier assessment that such a shipment would show that Kyrgyzstan and the U.S. were also developing this option for supporting the international effort in Afghanistan. (Note: The Embassy delivered the diplomatic note later on June 17. End Note.)

Planning for the Press

¶6. (S) Sarbayev said that he planned to make public the \$60 million annual payment the U.S. would be making under the agreements, but he would urge the Parliament to keep secret the text of the agreements, at least during deliberations. Nevertheless, Sarbayev recognized the need to develop draft guidance for dealing with the press in case the agreements become public after they are presented to Parliament.

¶7. (S) Charge suggested using the opportunity of the "meetings" on June 18 and 19 to coordinate language for use with the press, as well as to discuss -- at least initially -- the modalities of implementation of the new agreements. Sarbayev enthusiastically agreed, and said it was essential that U.S. and Kyrgyz sides make separate, but coordinate, statements in response to inquiries from the press. He did not see any need for a joint statement. Sarbayev said he would prepare proposed press guidance for the meeting and asked Charge to do the same.

Comment

¶8. (S) Sarbayev has steadily moved forward with his plan for preparing public and Parliamentary opinion for the change in course on Manas, placing articles about the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan in the local media and using the letters from President Karzai and President Obama to build the case for providing continued support to coalition efforts. While staging "negotiations" at this point seems a little bizarre, we can use the meeting time for productive conversations about press strategy, public statements, and modalities of implementation of the agreements once they are ratified.

LITZENBERGER